United Nations A/C.4/55/SR.8

General Assembly
Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
20 March 2001
English
Original: Russian

Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 8th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 3 October 2000, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Lewis (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Antigua and Barbuda)

Contents

Agenda item 18: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (Territories not covered under other agenda items* *(continued)*

Agenda item 88: Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations* *(continued)*

Agenda item 89: Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories* *(continued)*

Agenda item 90: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations* *(continued)*

Agenda item 12: Report of the Economic and Social Council* *(continued)*

Agenda item 91: Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories* *(continued)*

* Items which the Committee has decided to consider together.

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

00-67021 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 18: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (Territories not covered under other agenda items) *(continued)*

Agenda item 88: Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations *(continued)*

Agenda item 89: Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories *(continued)*

Agenda item 90: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations *(continued)*

Agenda item 12: Report of the Economic and Social Council *(continued)*

Agenda item 91: Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories *(continued)*

Draft resolution on information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 e of the Charter of the United Nations, submitted under agenda item 88 (A/55/23 (Part III), chap. XIII, sect. A)

1. **Mr. Grimes** (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote before the vote, said that, as in previous years, the American delegation would abstain in the vote because it considered that it was for the administering Power itself to determine whether its obligations under Article 73 *e* of the Charter had ceased.

2. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Gabon, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia.

Against:

None.

Abstaining:

France, Estonia, Israel, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

3. *The draft resolution was adopted by 103 votes to none, with 5 abstentions.*

4. **Ms. Bamber** (United Kingdom) said that, as in previous years, her country had abstained in the vote on the draft resolution. The United Kingdom did not take issue with the main aim of the draft resolution and would continue to comply fully with its obligations in respect of its overseas Territories.

5. However, the final decision as to whether a Non-Self-Governing Territory had reached a level of self-government sufficient to relieve the administering Power of its obligation to submit information under Article 73 *e* of the Charter rested with the Government of the Territory concerned and the administering Power, not the General Assembly.

6. **Mr. Al-Otaibi** (Kuwait) said that if his delegation had been present during the vote on the draft resolution on information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 *e*, it would have voted in favour.

7. **The Chairman** announced that the Committee had completed its consideration of agenda item 88.

Draft resolution on economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, submitted under agenda items 89 and 18 (A/55/23 (Part III), chap. XIII, sect. B)

8 **Mr. Grimes** (United States of America) proposed the deletion from the draft resolution under consideration of paragraph 7. The United States did not agree with the implication in the draft resolution that the very existence of foreign economic activity was an obstacle to the self-determination of Non-Self-Governing Territories. The text of the resolution had improved in recent years, but the United States would be forced to vote against it unless paragraph 7 was omitted or amended. There was no need for that paragraph, since the causes for concern were referred to in paragraphs 4 and 5. Furthermore, the paragraph implied that such activity was taking place continuously in all Territories that had not attained self-government. Illegal fishing was damaging wherever it took place, yet paragraph 7 stated that such activity was somehow especially damaging for Non-Self-Governing Territories. The United States rejected such an assertion.

9 *A recorded vote was taken on the deletion of paragraph 7.*

In favour:

Israel, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Against:

Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chile, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mexico, Nauru, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tunisia, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia.

Abstaining:

Andorra, Angola, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malta, Monaco, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Panama, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Singapore, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine.

10. *Paragraph 7 of the draft resolution was retained by 42 votes to 3, with 56 abstentions.*

11. *A recorded vote was taken on the draft resolution as a whole.*

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Gabon, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mexico, Mozambique, Monaco, Mongolia, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia.

Against:

Israel, United States of America.

Abstaining:

France, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

12. *The draft resolution was adopted by 110 votes to 2, with 2 abstentions.*

Draft decision relating to military activities and arrangements by colonial Powers in Territories under their administration, submitted under agenda items 89 and 18 (A/55/23 (Part III), chap. XIII, sect. I)

13. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mexico, Mozambique, Mongolia, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tunisia, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia.

Against:

Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining:

None.

14. *The draft decision was adopted by 71 votes to 41.*

15. **Mr. Minot** (France), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union had for some years been engaged in a dialogue with the Special Committee on Decolonization with a view to achieving broader consensus. It acknowledged the improvements made in the Special Committee's work in recent years and hoped that it would continue its efforts to ensure that texts it submitted were balanced in order to secure the widest support.

16. Unfortunately, as in previous years, the European Union was compelled to reiterate its objections to the draft decision on military activities, since the issue did not fall within the competence of the Fourth Committee. For that reason, the member States of the European Union had voted against the draft decision.

17. **Mr. Grimes** (United States of America) said that the United States had voted against the draft decision because it did not agree with the premise that the very existence of military activities in Non-Self-Governing Territories violated their right to self-determination. The right to self-defence was acknowledged in the Charter of the United Nations, and it was widely recognized that States had the right to develop collective security systems. In addition, the crucial role played by military bases in the past year in connection with the crisis in East Timor must be acknowledged. It was in that particular light that situations in the Territories should be viewed.

18. **Ms. Prince-Agbodjan** (Togo) said that her delegation had intended to vote in favour of the draft resolution on military activities.

19. **The Chairman** announced that the Committee had completed its consideration of agenda item 89.

Draft resolution relating to implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations, submitted under agenda items 90 and 12 (A/55/23 (Part III), chap. XIII, sect. C)

20. **Mr. Grimes** (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote before the vote, said that his delegation would abstain; it believed that the draft resolution was unnecessary and that it inappropriately linked the work of the specialized agencies and other organizations to the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. Those agencies needed no guidelines other than those contained in their mandates. The United States rejected such linkage.

21. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan,

Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mexico, Mozambique, Mongolia, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, New Zealand, Nigeria, Oman, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia.

Against:

None.

Abstaining:

Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

22. *The draft resolution was adopted by 74 votes to none, with 40 abstentions.*

23. **Mr. Minot** (France), speaking on behalf of the European Union, reiterated the European Union's support for the efforts of the specialized agencies to provide assistance to the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the humanitarian, technical and educational fields. At the same time, the mandates of those agencies must be strictly respected. The member States of the European Union had accordingly abstained in the vote.

24. **Mr. Babikir** (Chad) said that his delegation had intended to vote in favour of the draft resolution that had just been adopted.

25. **The Chairman** announced that the Committee had completed its consideration of agenda item 90.

Draft resolution relating to offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories, submitted under agenda item 91 (A/C.4/55/L.2)

26. *The draft resolution was adopted without a vote.*

27. **The Chairman** announced that the Committee had completed its consideration of agenda item 91.

Programme budget implications of draft resolutions

28. **Mr. Sattar** (Secretary of the Committee), referring to the recommendations of the Special Committee on Decolonization (A/55/23 (Part III), chap. XIII, sects. D-F), said that their implementation would have no additional financial implications for the 2000-2001 biennium. Paragraphs 8-11 of draft resolution A/C.4/55/L.3 would have no financial implications on the regular programme budget.

Draft resolution relating to the question of Western Sahara, submitted under agenda item 18 (A/C.4/55/L.3)

29. *The draft resolution was adopted without a vote.*

30. **Mr. Minot** (France), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the associated countries Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey as well as Iceland and Norway, said that the European Union welcomed the adoption without a vote of the resolution on Western Sahara, which had again that year been submitted as a Chairman's proposal.

31. The European Union shared the Secretary-General's view that the developments in recent months constituted a real source of concern about the possibility of achieving the consensus implementation of the settlement plan and of the agreements adopted by the parties, despite the support provided by the international community. The European Union welcomed the completion of the identification process and the pre-registration of refugees but noted that the positions of the two parties did not augur well for an early resolution of the question of admissibility of appeals.

32. The European Union fully supported the Secretary-General's decision to ask his Personal Envoy to consult with the parties and, taking into account

existing and potential obstacles, to explore ways and means to achieve an early, durable and agreed resolution of their dispute. It expressed the hope that the parties would meet to try to resolve the multiple problems relating to the implementation of the settlement plan and to agree upon a mutually acceptable political solution.

33. The European Union called upon the parties to cooperate fully with the Secretary-General, his Personal Envoy and his Special Representative, whom it commended for their efforts towards a fair and lasting solution to the question of Western Sahara. It called for the conclusion as soon as possible of all the agreements required and for the implementation of confidence-building measures. It encouraged the parties to continue their cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in order to prepare for the repatriation of Saharan refugees. The European Union noted that the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) played a crucial role in the peace process and that the full cooperation of the parties with MINURSO was of the utmost importance.

34. **Mr. Zahid** (Morocco) said that his delegation had contributed to the elaboration of the draft resolution on Western Sahara. For Morocco, however, the question of Western Sahara was a not a decolonization problem, but rather a matter of its own territorial integrity. Following the advisory opinion by the International Court of Justice and the conclusion of the Madrid agreements, those southern Moroccan provinces no longer had colonial status. That was why Morocco considered that the question no longer fell within the Committee's competence, especially as the Security Council was engaged in a search for a just and lasting solution. Morocco did not consider itself bound, legally, politically or morally, by the portions of the resolution that referred to decolonization.

35. The resolution mentioned serious difficulties in the organization of the referendum. Morocco had always cooperated unconditionally with the United Nations to ensure the success of that process with due regard for the right to participate in it of all Saharans, without discrimination. It regretted the fact that it had not been possible to achieve positive results at the most recent meeting held in Berlin. Morocco's conscientious efforts had not been met by the desired response or reaction from the other party. Morocco had brought to the Berlin meeting new proposals designed to help break the deadlock and it pledged to continue to cooperate in order to overcome a wholly contrived problem.

36. **Mr. Baali** (Algeria) said that the new resolution on Western Sahara just adopted by consensus was a source of satisfaction, in that it was a sign of support for the Saharan people in its 25-year struggle for freedom and dignity. Decisively stating that the question of Western Sahara was a decolonization problem, the Fourth Committee had voiced the deepest aspiration of the Saharan people: to exercise its inalienable right to self-determination. Reaffirming the viability of the United Nations settlement plan and the Houston agreements, the Committee had clearly indicated the framework in which a just and lasting solution must be sought. In paragraphs 5, 6 and 8 of the resolution, the Committee had clearly and definitively confirmed the shape and contents of the mandate given to the Secretary-General.

37. The international community had thereby once again unanimously expressed its support of the settlement plan as the sole framework for resolving the Western Saharan conflict. It was to be hoped that the existing impediments would be overcome and that the Saharan people would finally be able freely to determine its future, so that the Arab Maghreb could devote all its efforts to the only worthy struggle – to build a stable, enlightened and open Maghreb home.

38. **Mr. Diop** (Senegal) said that the Committee had done monumental work in the field of decolonization, guided by the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the provisions of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). It must be noted, however, that in the case of Western Sahara, the problem of decolonization did not arise, according to the ruling of the International Court of Justice and the Madrid agreements. In respect of the question of Western Sahara, it was necessary to rely on the Security Council, which was now involved in finding a solution.

Draft decision relating to the question of Gibraltar, submitted under agenda item 18 (A/C.4/55/L.4)

39. *The draft decision was adopted without a vote.*

Draft resolution relating to the question of New Caledonia, submitted under agenda item 18 (A/55/23 (Part III), chap. XIII, sect. D)

40. *The draft resolution was adopted without a vote.*

Draft resolution relating to the question of Tokelau, submitted under agenda item 18 (A/55/23 (Part III), chap. XIII, sect. E)

41. *The draft resolution was adopted without a vote.*

Draft resolution relating to the questions of American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Pitcairn, Saint Helena, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands, submitted under agenda item 18 (A/55/23 (Part III), chap. XIII, sect. F)

42. **The Chairman** announced that consultations on the consolidated draft resolution had not yet been completed. He accordingly suggested that no decision be adopted, to give the sponsors time to complete their consultations.

43. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.